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GSU View

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News

Generating Hope Named Program of the Year



A Generating Hope program that called attention to women's experiences with incarceration recently received the 2019 Program of the Year Award at the recent GSU Student Leadership event.

"A Woman's Journey Through the Criminal Justice System" was facilitated by graduate student, Falisa Byers, President of Generating Hope, which was founded in 2013 by students who had been impacted by incarceration.

Its mission is to increase accessibility to higher education, awareness around mass incarceration, and advocate for the dismantling of systemic barriers, while promoting support and healing.

If you would like additional information about this organization please contact [Falisa Byers](#).

Taking Action to Remove Obstacles for Adult Learners

Spring 2019 All-Campus Symposium



A computer programmer looking for a career change wants to return to finish his bachelor's degree 30 years after he earned his associates at a community college.

When the university he is applying to asks the busy father to produce transcripts from three schools he attended after high school, he becomes overwhelmed and wonders if it is worth the time, effort, and money required to navigate systems he hasn't engaged in decades.

This is an example of a costly and frustrating scenario that frequently plays out across college and university campuses, according to Pam Tate, Chief National Partnerships Officer for the Strada Education Network who led a recent symposium on adult learning at [Governors State University](#) (GSU).

Rigid requirements —like the need to submit decades-old transcripts—become a wall between retuning adult students and the higher education they seek. Even at universities like GSU, which was founded 50 years ago with the purpose of serving adult students, barriers exist. Today, nearly 50 percent of GSU's students are age 25 or older.

Though universities must maintain high standards, some conditions may prove too difficult for people busy with jobs and families, said Tate, whose work at Strada helps non-profits establish national partnerships to help adults in the U.S. who either have no college at all or some college but no degree.

"These are adult learners and they don't have time to waste," she said.

During the spring symposium, Tate and attendees offered practical recommendations to remove barriers to adults wanting to return to school. The daylong event, attended by more than 100 GSU faculty, staff, and students, continued a series that started in the fall.

In October, Catherine Marienau, Professor and Coordinator of MA in Educating Adults Program at DePaul's School for New Learning, discussed high-impact practices to effectively work with adult

students, a fast growing segment on college campuses.



In Illinois alone, 1.8 million people over 25 years old have some college and no degree. Another 680,000 people have an associate's degree but no bachelor's degree.

"This is your potential market —2.5 million people who could earn a bachelor's degree at Governors State. That's 30 percent of the state's population," said Tate.

During the symposium, Tate presented 10 benchmark practices ranging from adaptability to financing to transitioning students that help adult learners succeed at colleges and universities.

One of the success strategies centered on prior learning assessments (PLAs).

GSU students seeking an [Interdisciplinary Studies \(IDSS\)](#) degree receive credit for prior learning, though President Elaine P. Maimon suggested the tool be engaged more broadly in a return to Governors State's founding principles to serve returning adults, now part of the New Majority, which also includes first-generation students, students of color, and veterans.

"In 1969 and the early 70s, we were way ahead of the rest of world in higher education in terms of competency based education. We just didn't have the technology to support it. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, it is time to honor our roots in innovation and make sure we are leaders in this important movement of the 21st century," Dr. Maimon told symposium participants gathered on the stage of GSU's Center for Performing Arts.

Before the symposium, a selected cross section of GSU faculty, staff and administrators— institutional responders—as well as students over the age of 25 took a Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) survey to determine where GSU excelled in key areas and where the institution could improve.

Institutional representatives identified three areas where the university excels: student support services, such as academic and disability support; external partnerships, including community and social services for students; and student transitions in and out of the university as transferring or graduating students.

"There are so many great things going on here, and Governors State is a pioneer," said Tate "We just want to make sure that things keep getting better."

The base line data also indicated that GSU, like many universities including those with a long history of serving adult learners, have much more work to do.

On the problem of returning students being required to gather decades-old transcripts, Tate suggested the school take the lead by obtaining the records —and absorbing transcript fees—on behalf of the



student.

“Now all those barriers have been removed and the institution takes on the responsibility,” she said.

Another suggestion was for academic advisors to engage students more holistically. In a model called Reconnect Café, advisors would be trained to discuss a myriad of topics such as social services and life goals to help students plan inside and outside the classroom. In this model, advisors encourage interaction with students instead of waiting for students to make appointments. Additionally, the advisors are available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. to meet in a casual, café-like setting with coffee, bagels, and donuts.

To help students navigate a sometimes overwhelming college system, a GSU staff member suggested a Welcome Week for faculty and staff. Activities would include a scavenger hunt to help university workers find offices, service and program areas to better help students trying to navigate campus.

The spring symposium coincided with GSU’s budget planning, driven by the Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (PBAC) and the recently held [Charrettes](#), public forums to gain insight to help craft Strategy 2025.

During the symposium, President Maimon said the two planning processes dovetailed with ideas offered by Tate and participants.

“I am so uplifted by the work we’ve done here today. This is our blueprint, and some of the things we’re talking about are already in the works for next year,” she said.

Provost Beth Cada said the meeting energized her.

“Our best solutions come from the fact that we can sit together and we can do good problem solving.”

International Student-Athlete Strikes a Perfect Balance

2019 Graduate Profiles



Anyone working to become a CPA has to be able to see whether things add up. For Milica Maras, [Governors State University](#) provided the ideal equation—a place where she could play volleyball and earn her [Bachelor of Science in Accounting](#) degree.

The combination proved such a good fit that Maras not only became GSU's first international athlete, she won awards as she earned a perfect GPA.

Raised in Serbia, Maras attended a specialized high school in Belgrade that focused on business and law where she was introduced to accounting. An avid athlete, she also wanted to continue playing volleyball when she headed to college, but that was an opportunity only available in the *U.S.*, *she said*.

Maras came to the U.S. to study at a small college in Texas, which offered her a full scholarship.

Soon after arriving, she longed for a larger university and discovered GSU through a Google search for schools with both an accounting program and a NCAA or NAIA volleyball team.

The search netted great results, and the transition from a small college in the South to a regional institution was as smooth as her serve.

"I didn't find it hard to blend in at GSU," Maras said. "Everyone was interested in where I came from, and people would ask me to teach them a few Serbian words." Maras lived at [Prairie Place](#), sharing the kitchen with students from India and cooking food that intrigued the American students who stopped by to heat up a quick dinner.

"They would pop something in the microwave and say, 'What are you making? That smells good,'" she laughed.

In exploring accounting classes, Maras encountered [university Lecturer Michael Trendell](#), whose combination of textbook lessons with real-life examples in his auditing course helped Maras refine her professional goals. “He got me interested in auditing because he had many examples from his work life, and that really made sense to me,” she said. “He also made it very clear what was important, which is really helpful when you’re an international student.”

Maras also found a home on the women’s volleyball team, sporting number seven on her Jaguar jersey. Her prowess on the court, where she set records, was matched by her success in the classroom, where she earned a 4.0 GPA, leading to an [NAIA-Daktronics Scholar-Athlete Award](#) from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, one of 14 selected out of approximately 2,300 NAIA women’s



volleyball players.

Maras also was named to the Google Cloud Academic All-American NAIA Volleyball second team, drawing attention from the [local news media](#).

While some students struggle to keep all the balls in the air, Maras readily shares her secret.

“It’s all about organization,” she said. “If you’re organized, you can do anything you want.”

Maras seems to manage a full schedule of classes and practice and still found time to serve as president of the [International Culture Organization](#), which promotes diversity on campus.

“As an international student, it gives you a chance to be yourself and also an opportunity to learn about others,” she said.

During the club’s annual fashion show one year, she said, “I was wearing traditional Serbian dress with another Serbian girl, walking down the red carpet to traditional music. We started dancing to it, and pretty soon everyone was dancing, including President (Elaine) Maimon,” she said.

After graduation, Maras plans to work for a year, then head to graduate school before becoming a CPA, and heading back to Serbia.

“I want to work as a graduate assistant, hopefully at GSU,” she said. “I always tell people that this is a university that’s big enough to matter, but small enough to care about you,” she said.

Seems like a great balance for this future CPA.

Fifth Annual SALUTE Induction and Student Cording Ceremony



[Governors State University](#) celebrated 25 student veterans who have served their country and are now set to graduate college—many with advanced degrees—during the [5th Annual SALUTE and Military Connected Student Cording Ceremony](#).

“We have veterans represented in every single college and at every level throughout this university,” said an emotional Kevin Smith, Director of [Veterans Resource Center](#) at GSU, which has been named A Top Veteran Friendly School by “U.S. Veterans Magazine.”

Dan Wellman of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs encouraged the student veterans, seated before their loved ones on the stage of the Center for Performing Arts, to put their education to use in their communities.

“You succeeded here. ...You’ve served your nation. Now, continue to serve others,” he said.

Wellman joined GSU VIPs and others to drape the soon-to-be graduates with red, white, and blue cords. High achieving veterans also received crisp, white stoles as part of an induction into SALUTE, the nation’s only honor society that recognizes the academic achievements of student veterans.

Explaining the meaning behind each letter in SALUTE, Brigadier General (ret.) Stephen K. Curda, Executive Director of Illinois Joining Forces, commended the students for exemplifying service, academics, leadership, unity, tribute, and excellence.

“I am humbled and honored to here,” he said. “On behalf of our 625,000 veterans in the state of Illinois. ... thank you all.”

GSU President Elaine P. Maimon ended the ceremony by recognizing student veterans’ leadership on campus.

“You do so much to show an example for our students... You bring a commitment to the public good, and I want to thank you. I want to congratulate you. I want to salute you.”

Student Leadership Awards 2019



Student Life recently celebrated student and faculty achievement at the Student Leadership Awards ceremony. Winners included Athletes of the year, Milica Maras and John Orowick; Outstanding Faculty, Dr. Joi Patterson; Outstanding Student Organization, Student Occupational Therapy Association; Outstanding Graduate Students, David Cobb, Nechawn Johnson, and Sarah Wiora; Freshman of the Year, Brittney Spears; Excellence in Marketing, Student Education Association; Outstanding Undergraduate Student, Jamaal Webster; Program of the Year, A Woman's Journey Through the Criminal Justice System - Generating Hope; Outstanding Advisor of the Year, Dr. Megan McCaffrey (SEA); Elaine P. Maimon Award, Alexandra Wurz (Student Occupational Therapy Association).

Male Success Initiative Students Attend Black and Latino Male Summit



On Saturday, **April 20**, four MSI participants attended the Black and Latino Male Summit held at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. This year's summit, hosted by the La Casa Cultural

Latina and the Bruce Nesbitt African American Cultural Center, featured a keynote address by Dr. Miguel Saucedo. There were also a plethora of breakout sessions, some of which were facilitated by students.

Aside from getting great information and meeting other students, the MSI attendees were impressed by how students coordinated the whole conference from start to finish.

"It's amazing what we can do as students," said Aaron West. "Oftentimes we feel like we have to just show up, and don't realize that we can also be in charge. This was an eye-opening experience to go back to GSU and actually make some things happen."

Other attendees included GSU students Denzel Vance-Cousin, German Cutz, and Kyle LeGrone.

Family Development Center Roof Repaired Using Helicopter



On May 4, Facilities Development and Management (FDM) and contractor, McAuley Mechanical, enlisted a helicopter to replace 11 out of 22 units on the Family Development Center roof.

A four-phase plan to upgrade the FDM systems began last year with the replacement of the heating system's boilers, pumps, and piping. The upgrades are expected to be completed in 2020 with the replacement of the remaining 11 roofing units.

Checkmate: Strategic Students Start Chess Club on Campus

On any given day, you might catch [Governors State University Biology](#) sophomore, Nicholas Parente, and [IDSS](#) senior, Keyston Franklin, playing chess in the GSU cafeteria. To passers-by, their game may appear tranquil, but when asked to describe it, the students compared the match to a "rollercoaster."



For them, the excitement of the game lies in its variability. Parente says, “The pieces must always move in the same assigned directions, but it’s possible to have a million different outcomes.”

That’s what makes chess an excellent tool for developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The students’ appreciation for chess inspired them to establish a campus [Chess Club](#), which meets casually every other Friday from 3-5 p.m. in the cafeteria. Often they find passers-by want to spontaneously join in the game of strategy.

What they have discovered is that many Jaguars enjoyed chess at one point in their lives, but stopped playing for one reason or another.

The Chess Club seeks to reignite that passion and foster a sense of community on campus.

To join, search on the Jaguar Connection for Chess Club, or drop by the cafeteria on a Friday afternoon for a silent, but thrilling game of chess.

Save the Date: GSU’s 50th Birthday/Day of Giving



On **July 17**, celebrate GSU's 50th birthday! Join the entire GSU community including employees, retirees, alumni and students for a free “family reunion” style festival, then drive or take the party bus to the Park Forest Main Street Nights for a free concert by Maggie Speaks and Theo Peoples + fun activities for all ages. The birthday will also become GSU's annual Day of Giving, because what better way to celebrate a milestone than to support a great cause? For GSU's 50th birthday, please consider donating \$50 or more. You can make your donation at www.govst.edu/donate.

STEAM Camp



Governors State University is once again sponsoring hands-on science, technology, art and mathematics (STEAM) Camp fun for summer 2019! Through a series of fun, highly interactive activities students ages 11-16 will learn basic concepts in the visual and performing arts, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, physics, and robotics.

Session 1: Monday, July 15 to Friday, July 19, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Session 2: Monday, July 22 to Friday, July 26, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

STEAM Camp Plus activities available Monday to Thursday, 3 – 5 p.m. Additional fee of \$60 per session, per camper applies.

Costs: \$200 per session, per camper; limited number of partial scholarships may be available: please refer to website for more information.

Register [here](#). Questions? 708.534.4088.

Second Annual CSIFF Accepting Submissions



The Chicago Southland International Film Festival is accepting submissions for its second annual festival at Governors State University. The international short film competition featuring both student and professional films from around the globe will take place **September 6 – 7**, and the Feature Film Showcase (non-competition) will consist of feature film screenings on **September 8**.

[Submit your film](#) for consideration by **May 19**, and learn more at www.govst.edu/CSIFF.

Announcements and Events

Spring Choral Concert



Enjoy an evening of music and show support for our students. The spring Music class will perform its Spring Choral Concert on Wednesday, May 8 at 6 p.m. in Sherman Hall (E1530). This event will be sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences.

Plots Available in University Sustainable Garden



Plots are currently available in the University Sustainable Garden. Plots can be rented by the GSU Community (faculty, staff, and students) and the community at large. Each year, planting starts on or around May 15th.

For information, click [here](#).

South Africa Study Abroad Program



The College of Business will take a group of students—from any discipline—to study abroad in South Africa in December. This is an excellent opportunity for all students to learn about the business and culture of the emerging market of South Africa, particularly in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Special grants and scholarships are available to students.

Come to the next info session on **May 30** at 4 p.m. in D1496 or contact Study Abroad Coordinator [Amy Schoenberg](#) for more information.

Fall 2019 Welcome Week Doodle Poll

Student Life has begun the initial planning phases for Welcome Week 2019. As we prepare to welcome students back to campus in the fall, departments, divisions, and student organizations are encouraged to plan events and activities that offer a festive and lively environment during the first week of classes, August 26—August 31. Requests are accepted via a Doodle Poll.

Steps to access Welcome Week Doodle Poll:

1. Click [here](#) to access the poll.
2. Select an available time frame.
3. Include your name or department name in the “participants” field.
4. Click send.

Welcome Week is an exciting time of the year for the GSU community. Although departments are not mandated to program an event, Student Life is excited to offer the opportunity to make this year’s Welcome Week one for the record books! Our goal is to have a jam-packed calendar of events that support student connections while making students’ first days on campus memorable.

Requests are due by **July 11**. Email [Konya Sledge](#) for inquiries.

Bench for Michele McMaster



We're almost halfway to our goal: approximately 230 pounds of plastic have been collected to date; 270 pounds are remaining to reach the goal of 500 pounds to make a bench in honor of Michele McMaster. The faculty and staff of the Division of Arts and Letters and College of Arts and Sciences welcome you to continue collecting plastic bags to reach the goal. Remember, you can recycle any of the following items:



Bring them to the T-Rex Boxes located inside and outside of the library, the CAS Dean's Office, across from the E Wing Elevator on the second Floor, and the F Wing entrance on the first floor. Please, no plastic bottles.

Questions? Email gsulibraryinfo@govst.edu.

New Study Rooms, Charging Stations in the Library



Looking for a place to charge your phones or computers? Looking for a group study area complete with computers, wide screen monitors, VHS/DVD players, Blu-ray, white boards and more? The library is the place for you. Three group study rooms are available—students can [click here](#) to reserve a room.

Plus, the library now has a charging station for apple and android phones and computers and two plug-in charging towers. One of the towers is available in the library and the other is on the library balcony.

"We are so happy to be able to offer students services that they have requested," said Lydia Morrow Ruetten, Dean of the GSU Library. "Being able to support our GSU students, faculty and community is one of our key goals here in the GSU Library!"

Remember, the Library is Your Research Resource 24/7. Contact the [library](#) with any questions.

Films on Demand Available at the GSU Library

Films on Demand are just a click away. Celebrate the 100th birthday of the American icon Jackie Robinson with the two-part documentary series produced by legendary producer Ken Burns; or check the offerings on HBO, TED, or films that are exclusive to Films on Demand.

[Click here](#) to find Films on Demand. Click on the Streaming Video link located in the center box, and that will take to you the Films on Demand Link.

If you have any questions, please contact the [library](#).

Support Red Nose Day



Watch Red Nose Day special TV event on **Thursday, May 23**. From now until May 23, join SEA & KDP to help raise awareness for childhood poverty across the globe. Get your red Nose Day gear at Walgreens. To support this cause, post pictures in red noses (with hashtags), donate money, and watch the TV event special on NBC.

LSW-LCSW Preparation Course



The School of Extended Learning will offer a two-day LSW-LCSW Preparation Course on **Saturday, June 1** and **Saturday, June 8** from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

This review course will use the most up-to-date examination materials and will reflect the latest diagnostic publication (DSM-5™). Attendees will receive a comprehensive study guide with current practice questions, test-taking strategies, information on what to expect on the day of the exam, as well as reference materials at the end of the study guide.

The course will be taught by Dr. Giesla Grumbach and Dr. Lydia Falconnier. Please register [here](#). For more information, please email [Dr. Felicia L. Townsend](#) or call 708.534.3044.

June 2019 IDOC State Testing

The Illinois Department of Corrections is taking applications for the position of Correctional Officer Trainee. All who are interested, [click here](#) to fill out a brief application. You will then be contacted with an invitation to attend the screening, which will take place on **Monday, June 10**, and **Tuesday, June 11**. For more information, please contact the Office of Career Services at 708.235.3974.

For questions, contact [Cynthia Staples](#).

Celebrate the Life of Tim Fisher with a Night Out at the Ballpark



The late Tim Fisher was a student in the College of Health and Human Services pursuing a bachelor's degree in Health Administration. Tim was also the husband of Katie Frossard Fisher, a graduate of the College of Business, an employee in Financial Services and a Civil Service Senator. Tim was also a huge fan of the Joliet Slammers.

Tim passed away in 2017 after a brief illness. To celebrate his love for the Slammers as well as his passion as a GSU student, the Civil Service Senate and the GSU Foundation are sponsoring a night out at the ball park with profits from the ticket sales being donated the Civil Service Senate Scholarship funds that benefit employers, their spouses, and their dependents. The game will take place **June 15** at 6 p.m. at 1 Mayor Art Schultz Drive in Joliet, IL.

For more information or for tickets, please contact [Katie Frossard Fisher](#) in Financial Services at X7411.

Emerald City Theatre Summer Camp



Emerald City Theatre returns to the Center for Performing Arts this summer with an immersive, week-long, summer camp **June 17-21**. Combining some of Broadway's biggest hits from classics like *Newsies*, *Into the Woods*, and *Sound of Music* with contemporary smash hits like *Hamilton*, *Wicked*, *Dear Evan Hansen* and more. Campers will focus on the finer details of performing musical theatre with an emphasis on dancing and vocal technique to hone their skills and challenge them as performers. The final showcase on **June 21** at 7:30 p.m. will feature a number of Broadway hits, connected with characters created by the students.

Register your camper through the box office at 708.235.2222. Camp registration fee is \$250. Limited to 60 campers.

CAPM® Exam Preparation Course 100% online



Starting **July 15**, the School of Extended Learning will offer the CAPM® Exam Preparation Course 100% online. The course breaks down complex topics for anyone who is interested in or are just starting out in project management.

By successfully completing this course, participants will earn the required 23 contact hours needed to meet the credential application requirements for the PMI CAPM® Certification Exam. GSU is a Registered Education Provider (R.E.P) with the PMI® with all material approved through the PMI®.

The course will be taught by Richard Manprizio. GSU students, faculty, staff and alumni can register at a special rate of \$550. Please register [at this link](#).

For more information, please contact Dr. [Felicia L. Townsend](#) at 708.534.3044.

Join Us This Fall for Line Dancing Lessons



Dawn the Dancin' Deeva is committed to having fun while striving for excellence in dance. Dawn believes everyone has the ability to increase physical and emotional wellbeing through dance. Participants will enjoy quality instruction from Dawn in a relaxed environment that promotes self-confidence, self-respect, inner strength, discipline, and appreciation through dance.

Join us this fall to learn the latest line dance steps. Classes will take place on Wednesdays from 1 – 2 p.m., **September 18 – October 9**. No partner required. The fee to join is \$25 with advanced registration, or \$10 at the door per session.

[Register here.](#)

Mindfulness Practice in the Library Every Thursday



Join Dr. Tim Pedigo every Thursday afternoon from 3:20 – 4:20 p.m. for a meditation session and mindfulness practice in the GSU Library. "These are challenging times, but an amazing opportunity to practice mindfulness," offered Dr. Pedigo.

Questions? Email GSULibraryInfo@govst.edu.



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